

troubled that this provision gives the Secretary of Defense no direction on the need to provide for the protection of pension and other employee benefits in the conversion process, especially for those employees whose length of service would reasonably entitle them to expect such benefits.

Second, I am sorely disappointed in the conference reports resolution in regards to a Senate amendment which would have elevated the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to a four-star ranking and made the Chief a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS]. Although I did not support putting the Guard chief of the JCS, I do believe that there is currently a serious problem in resourcing for the Guard which can be improved by elevating the Chief of the Guard. I supported giving the Chief a fourth star and appointing him to the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee [JROC]. Sec. 901, H.R. 1119 instead creates two new assistants to the Chairman of the JCS: one for National Guard Matters and one for Reserve Matters.

Two 2-stars do not make a four star, nor does it solve the real budget problem within the Army. When I and several of my colleagues wrote the Chairman of the National Security Committee to urge the inclusion of legislation that would elevate the Chief of the National Guard Bureau from 3-star to 4-star general and place him on the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee, I believe then, as I believe now, that this is the right thing to do.

There are those critics that argue that making the Chief of the National Guard a four-star would be disruptive to the total force policy or is not justified. I disagree, because there is precedence, just look at the Marine Corps, the commandant of the Marine Corps at one point in time was a three-star general and did not have a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Marine Corps to my knowledge are to this day part of the Navy. The Marine Corps to this day is a shining example of the total force concept, fully integrated across the spectrum and fully funded. Another example is the Coast Guard, while not part of the Department of Defense in peacetime, they support the Navy in times of war. Currently, the Coast Guard has a four-star admiral and four three-star vice admirals, for a \$3.8 billion force of more than 75,000 active and reserve Coast Guard members across the country. The Coast Guard does a tremendous job of supporting maritime law and drug enforcement, maritime transportation support and disaster assistance in their domestic role. Now let's compare this to the National Guard. The National Guard has a three-star lieutenant general for \$10 billion force of more than 466,000 full-time and part-time members in the Army and Air National Guard who are performing vital missions throughout the country and the world right this minute. This in itself is justification for the National Guard to have a four-star, not to mention that the National Guard has 54 percent of the Army's combat force structure and is located in over 2,700 communities in all States and territories.

Finally, concerning sec. 411, end strengths for Selected Reserve, where the Army National Guard was reduced in endstrength by 5,000 spaces. I do not support reducing the Army National Guard endstrength. The bottomline here is that the Army National Guard is the only service component, active or reserve, to be reduced below the President's

budget request. The conference report cites the Army off-site of June 5, 1997 as the reason for reducing the endstrength of the Army National Guard. As I understand the results of the off-site, the active Army should have been reduced by 5,000 spaces as well, but that was not included in this bill. In fact the Army is not able to meet its endstrength. In fact the Army National Guard is currently meeting its endstrength goals. It makes it very difficult to justify reducing the Army National Guard, in essence punishing them for meeting their strength.

In conclusion, I believe that the provisions I have mentioned do nothing to enhance the resourcing and readiness issues faced by the National Guard and Reserve. I do believe that we should revisit these provisions next year as we prepare the fiscal year 1999 Defense authorization bill.

HONORING HERRICKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Herricks Middle School in Albertson, NY, which has recently received a Blue Ribbon Award for academic excellence by the Department of Education. The school will be honored in a ceremony with Education Secretary, Richard Riley on November 6.

Herricks Middle School strives to give every student the most well rounded education possible by fostering each child's cognitive, social, and physical development. Students are required to take a seventh grade guidance class, where they can initiate a positive relationship with a guidance counselor, early on in their academic careers. The school's academic teams, which consist of teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and parents, focus upon each individual student, in order to provide critical support during difficult times. Herricks Middle School also has a diverse and innovative extracurricular program.

The school has also placed an important focus upon computer literacy programs. The administration has recognized that a computer in a classroom may not necessarily foster a student's education unless a teacher is fully versed in the proper technology. Thus, a part time staff member has been hired to train teachers in computer technology and help them apply it in a classroom setting. Since this training program was implemented, computer use by teachers has tripled.

The school's innovative curriculum also includes interdisciplinary units on the Holocaust and immigration. All of these factors have combined to create an extraordinary learning environment. The average daily attendance rate at Herricks Middle School exceeds an astounding 96 percent. The school's average standardized test scores in reading and math fall between the 82d and 92d percentiles nationwide. Much of this success can also be attributed to the leadership and commitment of the school's principal, Dr. Seth Weitzman.

Herricks Middle School is working to build tomorrow's leaders through innovative academic and guidance programs, constant teacher training, and diversified extracurricular

activities. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in honoring this school for their extraordinary work and congratulating them on receiving the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award.

HONORING THE SUNY/BROOKLYN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to acknowledge that on November 7, 1997, the SUNY/Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center will celebrate 30 years of service to the borough of Brooklyn and the city of New York.

The center was established in 1966 by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, the New York State Legislature, and State University of New York. Throughout the years, the Brooklyn Center has served over 200,000 residents, enrolled 50,000 students and graduated approximately 28,000 adults and young adults. These graduates have become high school principals, corporate executives, college professors, city and State employees, secretaries, computer technicians, and mechanical drafters. Over the past 5 years the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center's alumni have contributed \$7 million to the city and State treasuries. This program has also made it possible for 800 former welfare recipients to become gainfully employed.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to congratulate SUNY/Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center, and to wish them many more productive and prosperous years.

HONORING GREG LAIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WILDERNESS INQUIRY

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, on October 22 I had the pleasure of hosting the signing event that celebrated the establishment of a general framework of cooperation—a memorandum of understanding—between the Federal land management agencies and a private entity; Wilderness Inquiry. These agreements have a positive goal of increasing opportunities for people of all abilities to get out and enjoy America's public lands. I was joined by Chairman Jim Hansen and a number of representatives of Federal agencies who have dedicated their work to increasing access to our Nation's special places for all Americans. None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of an extraordinary Minnesotan, Greg Lais.

Since 1978, Wilderness Inquiry has served 30,000 people of all abilities on trips throughout North America, Europe and Australia. Greg Lais observes, "Meeting new friends, exploring wilderness areas, and participating in exciting outdoor activities is what Wilderness Inquiry is all about. Be prepared to step out of your normal routine and enter a world where time is measured by the sun and movement governed by wind and weather."